

*Department of Administrative Services
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NEWS RELEASE

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“Moving in the right direction!”

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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To: Fleet Contacts

Subject: Fleet Industry News...

LEGISLATIVE PUSH FOR MORE RENEWABLE FUELS

The House-passed energy bill would require refiners to use five billion gallons of renewable fuels -- ethanol and biodiesel -- by 2012. Meanwhile, the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee approved a measure earlier this year that mandates refiners use six billion gallons of renewable fuels by 2012. A likely floor amendment would increase that level to eight billion gallons.

INCENTIVES FOR DIESEL REPLACEMENTS

The House-passed energy bill includes an amendment to require the Environmental Protection Agency to establish a program for awarding grants on a competitive basis to public agencies and companies for fleet modernization programs including installation of retrofit technologies for diesel trucks.

The amendment, sponsored by Rep. Juanita Millender-McDonald (D-Calif), would authorize \$100 million for EPA to be used as an incentive to replace older heavy duty trucks and to retrofit existing diesel vehicles.

DRIVER TRAINING RULE CHALLENGED

A federal rule establishing training requirements for truck and bus drivers is grossly inadequate because it doesn't require that entry-level drivers receive any training in how to operate a commercial motor vehicle, a coalition of safety advocacy groups has told a federal court.

In a brief, filed in the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia, the coalition asks the court to overturn a rule issued in May 2004 by the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA). The rule required drivers with less than one year's driving experience to be trained in four specific areas, but does not include on-the-road training.

SUIT CHALLENGES EPACT RULING ON PRIVATE AND GOVERNMENT FLEETS

The U.S. Department of Energy is violating the Energy Policy Act two environmental groups charged in a lawsuit filed last month.

The suit was filed in U.S. District Court in San Francisco by the Center for Biological Diversity and the Friends of the Earth. It accuses the DOE of "flouting a requirement" to extend the alternative fuel mandate to private and local government fleets. The suit also accused 14 federal agencies, including the White House, of failing to comply with various provisions of the Energy Policy Act of 1992.

CONGRESS URGED TO UPDATE CRASH TESTS

Congressional investigators say the government needs to upgrade its crash test program for motor vehicles. The Government Accountability Office (GAO) said the usefulness of the crash test program has diminished with the growing popularity of SUVs and other light trucks. The GAO said the result has been different safety risks not fully addressed by the tests.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) tests vehicles and rates them on a scale of one to five stars to help consumers judge an automobile's crashworthiness and likelihood of rolling over.

The report says the tests need to better account for SUVs, which have been more susceptible to rollovers, and the damage caused when the larger vehicles strike smaller passenger cars. Results of government crash tests are posted SaferCar.gov.

HYBRID BUSES DELIVERED TO NATIONAL PARK

A fleet of new hybrid buses delivered in California's Sierra Nevada will help shuttle tourists while emitting less diesel. The diesel-electric buses like the ones recently delivered to Yosemite National Park are already running in 22 cities around the country, but this will be the first fleet to operate in a national park. The shuttles will carry visitors along Yosemite Valley, and into the Mariposa Grove of Giant Sequoias, a stand of some of the world's largest trees.

The vehicles still consume diesel, but they're vastly more fuel efficient, according to General Motors Corp. The buses are manufactured by Gillig Corp., of Hayward, Calif., and use a GM Allison Electric Drive system.

The hybrid buses produce up to 90 percent less emissions, one of the reasons why park officials chose the technology, National Park Service Deputy Director Don Murphy said in a statement. The new buses are also much quieter than the conventional models.

NHTSA INVESTIGATES GM TRUCKS FOR BRAKES

The federal government is investigating 1.3 million General Motors Corp. trucks for a braking problem that led to a recall of similar vehicles in Canada. The alleged defect involves a sensor that activates the antilock brake system. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration is looking at whether salt used to clear winter roads can build up and cause the antilock brakes to activate improperly, increasing stopping distances at low speeds. The probe involves 1999-2002 Chevrolet Silverado and GMC Sierra pickups and SUVs that share the same basic underpinnings, including the Chevrolet Suburban, Tahoe and Avalanche; the GMC Yukon, Yukon Denali and Yukon XL; and the Cadillac Escalade and Escalade EXT. The investigation is looking at trucks in 20 cold-weather states, mainly in the Midwest and Northeast, including Michigan.

STUDY CONFIRMS CHILDREN SAFEST IN BACK SEAT

A new study emphasizes what every parent must know: children are safer in car crashes when they sit in the back seat and are less likely to be injured when safety seats and seat belts are used.

The study was sponsored by The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, the American Academy of Pediatrics and the world's largest insurer, State Farm Insurance Co. The findings are based on information from more than 370,000 State Farm policyholders involved in car crashes.

Researchers say the combination of sitting in the back seat and using safety restraints would have prevented more than 1,000 of the 3,665 serious injuries to children under 16 in the crashes, although the study did not say when those crashes occurred. The study also notes that almost a third of the nearly 1,800 children who died in car crashes in 2003 were riding in the front seat and more than half weren't restrained.

The study found children were 40 percent safer in the back seat than the front in car crashes, and the risk of injury dropped to less than 2 percent when safety seats and seat belts were used. The report also concluded that minivans and large cars and sport-utility vehicles were the safest for children, while smaller vehicles had higher injury rates.

TIDBITS FROM AROUND THE U.S.

Illinois: Many Chicago area school children now ride on school buses powered by cleaner-burning biodiesel. Chicago School Transit, the first school bus service in the Chicago Metropolitan Area to use a biodiesel blend, kicked off its new fuel program on Earth Day, April 22. Biodiesel is a fuel made from renewable resources like soybean oil and other fats and vegetable oils. The school buses run on B20, a blend of 20 percent biodiesel and 80 percent diesel. B20 reduces exhaust emissions that are a threat to human health.

Iowa: Gov. Tom Vilsack recently signed a law raising the speed limit on the state's rural interstate highways to 70 mph from the current 65 mph, and doubling fines for motorists who exceed the new speed limit. The governor said he would direct the Iowa State Police to strictly enforce the 70 mph limit, which takes effect July 1.

Oregon: Gov. Ted Kulongoski plans to bypass the Legislature to ensure that Oregon adopts California's tougher auto pollution standards. Kulongoski has said he wants Oregon get tough on global warming, arguing that promoting renewable energy and reducing greenhouse gas emissions will be good for the state's economy. The push to adopt the California standards in Oregon first came in December when the Governor's Advisory Group on Global Warming included them among a number of steps the state should take to reduce emissions. The governor will form a task force to figure out how to adopt the California standards, which would also improve fuel efficiency